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AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (Canceled)

2. (Previously presented) A method of tunneling a transaction based protocol through a generic Internet protocol (IP) transport, the method comprising:

providing a generic messaging structure that includes a transport protocol, a message buffer, a source-address field and one or more data fields for transparent routing of a user protocol over the IP transport during a host-to-host communication or telecommunication session;

providing an application program interface to the generic messaging structure, the interface including a mechanism for a user to choose a desired transport and associated protocol for transparently routing the user protocol over the transport in accordance with the chosen transport protocol within the one or more data fields;

creating a base class library including plural defined source and header files, and

providing a mechanism for deriving a transaction-based protocol-specific class that is compatible with the base class library, the transaction-based protocol-specific class further being derived based in part on the chosen transport protocol.

3. (Previously presented) The method of claim 2, wherein the transaction-based protocol-specific class is derived using an object-oriented inheritance based mechanism.

4. (Previously presented) The method of claim 2 including compiling the transaction-based protocol-specific class when a transaction and the transport protocol are determined.

5. (Currently amended) A method of tunneling any related data-, control-, or routing-related protocol through a generic Internet protocol (IP) transport, the method comprising:

creating a base class library including plural defined source and header files, the base class library further including base class constructors of virtual, copy, and assignment, and generic access methods;

choosing a transport protocol for transparently routing a user protocol over the transport; and

providing a mechanism for deriving a transaction-based protocol-specific class that is compatible with the base class library, the transaction-based protocol-specific class further being derived based in part on the chosen transport protocol, wherein the transaction-based protocol-specific class is derived using an object-oriented inheritance based mechanism.

6. (Currently amended) The method of claim 5 which further comprises:

providing a generic messaging structure that includes ~~a~~ the transport protocol, a message buffer, a source-address field and one or more data fields for transparent routing of ~~a~~ the user protocol over the IP transport during a host-to-host communication or telecommunication session~~, and~~

~~providing an application program interface to the generic messaging structure, the interface including a mechanism for a user to choose a desired transport and associated protocol for transparently routing the user protocol over the transport in accordance with the chosen transport protocol within the one or more data fields~~.

7. (currently amended) The method of claim 5~~, wherein the transaction-based protocol specific class is derived using an object oriented inheritance based mechanism~~ which further comprises:

providing an application program interface to a generic messaging structure, the interface including a mechanism for a user to choose a desired transport and associated protocol for transparently routing the user protocol over the transport in accordance with the chosen transport protocol within the generic messaging structure.

8. (Currently amended) ~~The method of claim 7 further including:~~ A method of tunneling any related data-, control-, or routing-related protocol through a generic Internet protocol (IP) transport, the method comprising:

creating a base class library including plural defined source and header files, the base class library further including base class constructors of virtual, copy, and assignment, and generic access methods;

providing a mechanism for deriving a transaction-based protocol-specific class that is compatible with the base class library, the transaction-based protocol-specific class further being derived based in part on the chosen transport protocol; and

compiling the transaction-based protocol-specific class prior to a run-time selection of the chosen transport protocol, and

selecting at run-time the pre-compiled transaction-based protocol-specific class for the chosen transport protocol, wherein the transaction-based protocol-specific class is derived using an object-oriented inheritance based mechanism.

9. (Previously presented) An application programming interface for transparently routing data between hosts in an Internet protocol (IP) transport, the interface comprising:

a message buffer data structure defining a protocol-generic parent class, message, source-address and data fields for a chosen transport protocol;

a message creation mechanism for creating a message and adding it to the message buffer data structure; and

a protocol creation mechanism for deriving a protocol-specific child class based on the chosen transport protocol that renders new protocol-specific sub-fields of said protocol field of said message buffer data structure.

10. (Previously presented) The interface of claim 9 in which the protocol-specific child class is derived using an object-oriented inheritance based mechanism.

11. (Previously presented) The interface of claim 9 further including:

compiling the transaction-based protocol-specific class prior to a run-time selection of the chosen transport protocol, and

selecting at run-time the pre-compiled transaction-based protocol-specific class for the chosen transport protocol.

12. (Previously presented) The interface of claim 10, wherein said message creation and protocol creation mechanisms include computer-readable and computer-executable software instructions.

13. (Original) The interface of claim 12, which includes software source code and headers in C/C++ programming language form.

14. (Canceled)

15. (Previously presented) A computer-readable medium containing a program for tunneling a transaction based protocol through a generic Internet protocol (IP) transport, the program comprising:

instructions providing a generic messaging structure that includes a transport protocol, a message buffer, a source-address field and one or more data fields for transparent routing of a user protocol over the IP transport during a host-to-host communication;

instructions for providing an application program interface to the generic messaging structure, the interface including a mechanism for a user to choose a desired transport and associated protocol for transparently routing the user protocol over the transport in accordance with the chosen transport protocol within the one or more data fields;

instructions for creating a base class library including plural defined source and header files, and

instructions for providing a mechanism for deriving a transaction-based protocol-specific class that is compatible with the base class library, the transaction-based protocol-specific class further being derived based in part on the chosen transport protocol.

16. (Currently amended) A computer-readable medium containing a program for tunneling a data-related protocol through a generic Internet protocol (IP) transport, the program comprising:

instructions for creating a base class library including plural defined source and header files;

instructions for providing a mechanism for deriving a transaction-based protocol-specific class that is compatible with the base class library, the transaction-based protocol-specific class further being derived based in part on ~~the~~ a chosen transport protocol;

instructions for compiling the transaction-based protocol-specific class prior to a run-time selection of the chosen transport protocol; and

instructions for selecting at run-time the pre-compiled transaction-based protocol-specific class for the chosen transport protocol.

17. (Currently amended) The computer-readable medium in accordance with claim 16, which computer-readable medium further comprises:

~~instructions for providing a generic messaging structure that includes a transport protocol, a message buffer, a source address field and one or more data fields for transparent routing of a user protocol over the IP transport during a host to host communication; and~~

instructions for providing an application program interface to ~~the~~ a generic messaging structure, the interface including a mechanism for a user to choose a desired transport and associated protocol for transparently routing ~~the~~ a user protocol over the transport in accordance with the chosen transport protocol within the ~~one or more data fields~~ generic messaging structure.

18. (Previously presented) The method of claim 2 wherein the transport protocol is operated on by a signaling function and wherein the user protocol may be routed over the transport without a switching function.

19. (Previously presented) The method of claim 2 including populating a message structure of the transaction-based protocol-specific class with tag-length-value (TLV) trios when the transaction-based protocol-specific class is derived.

20. (New) The computer-readable medium in accordance with claim 16, which computer-readable medium further comprises:

instructions for providing a generic messaging structure that includes the transport protocol, a message buffer, a source-address field and one or more data fields for transparent routing of a user protocol over the IP transport during a host-to-host communication or telecommunication session.